THE IDENTITY DILEMMAS OF THE ROMANIAN WRITER IN EXILE AND THE SCRIPTURAL-IDENTITARY FORMULA OF THE DIARIST SELF – GABRIELA MELINESCU, „JURNALUL SUEDEZ" / „THE SWEDISH JOURNAL"

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Introduction

Our research is supported by a multiple theoretical basis, which aims to accommodate the current perspectives on the issue of cultural identity with the motivational, cultural and linguistic specificity of the Romanian exile, and with characteristics of structure and content of autofiction in some of its hypostases, particularly those of the personal journal. The element which is common to all these theoretical fields is, we believe, the creation of a/some identity profiles meant to remain illusory as long as they are the result of an ideological objective, of an intention of retrieval or of a strategy of fictionalization specific to autobiographic narrative.

The status of an exiled and the identity dilemmas which accompany it and, to a great extent, aim for it, can be found in their most obvious form, in the auto-identitary narratives similar to the journal. Accordingly, the choice of Gabriela Melinescu's *Swedish Journal* illustrates, by its scriptural mechanisms of autofictionalization and self-delusionment, the steps in the formation/search for the self and the exile's function of cultural-identitary self-revelation.

1. The concept of cultural identity – cultural illusions and disillusions

The issue of identity is called today to provide solutions for the present complex situations that appeared because of the disequilibrium in the traditional relation between the centre and the margin, the periphery rightfully claiming an equal status, on almost all levels, with the one of the previous nucleus of power. Adding to this the supra-ethnic and supra-state considerations, which are associated with the syntagm of the *universal village*, as well as, in a particular manner, the effort of the countries that were part of the former soviet bloc of influence to rally to the Western cultural and social standards, the issue of individual and group identity is far from solved. Moreover, the expatriation, on political grounds, of certain Eastern intellectuals and the present free circulation in Europe of the citizens belonging to ex-communist states bring forth a series of problems connected to a continuous identitary accommodation. Matters are particularly

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complicated; therefore, in these pages, we will confine our discussions to bringing forth certain opinions on the concept itself, in order to create the minimum theoretical background necessary for the intended text analysis. In the words of Peter Prevos, "Social identity is the concept of individuals labelling themselves as members of particular social groups—such as Nationality, Social class, Subculture, Ethnicity, Gender and Employment (Wikipedia 2004). The question to be answered in this assignment is whether we are free to choose our own identity or if identity is socially constructed through ideas like Nationality, Ethnicity, Race and Social Class" (Prevos, "Cultural Identity", http://www.prevos.net).

To complete the idea above, John Tomlinson, in *Globalization and Cultural Identity*, shows that "identity is not in fact merely some fragile communal-psychic attachment, but a considerable dimension of *institutionalized* social life in modernity. Particularly in the dominant form of *national identity*, it is the product of deliberate cultural construction and maintenance via both the regulatory and the socializing institutions of the state: in particular, the law, the education system and the media" (Tomlison, http://www.polity.co.uk/global/pdf/gtreader2etomlinson.pdf).

As far as Jean-François Bayart is concerned, in his book, *The Illusion of Cultural Identity*, he suggests that the emphasis which is insistently laid nowadays on the personal identities of a religious, ethnic, national, cultural nature, etc. is no more than a symptom of the actual state of facts, where the communication among different cultures is only an appearance. [1] Counterbalancing the identitary-cultural illusions, Victor Neumann proposes, in the article "Perspective comparative asupra filozofiei multiculturale", the concept of multiple identity, perceived as "un concept flexibil privind identitatea persoanei şi grupului/grupurilor" [a flexible concept regarding the identity of the person and of the groups], suitable to capture the identity disarticulations experienced by those who have two or more cultural roots or by the persons who "prin deplasările dintr-o cultură în alta sînt puse sub semnul incertitudinilor de tot felul, riscînd să trăiască într-un disconfort psihic creat de identitățile culturale pretins curate" [Being born while passing from one culture to another are confronted with all kinds of uncertainties, thus, risking to live in a state of psychological discomfort created by the supposedly cultural identities] (Neumann http://phantasma.ro/wp/?p=2667). [2] Despite the apparent theoretical and conceptual stability provided by Victor Neumann's hypothesis, one may notice that multiple identity only increases the multitude of variables, which create the fluid identity profile of the self that voicing a confession in a journal, while in exile. [3]

2. The controversies of exile. The Romanian writer between the illusions of the West and the trauma of the uprooting

Being necessarily connected to the individual's ideological, political and social resistance to a totalitarian system, exile often represented, for the European intellectuals, the only solution for surviving and also for keeping their moral

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rectitude. The Romanian writers who emigrated before 1989 converted their stored creative energy and the dissatisfactions gathered in their native country in compensating representations of the self. Thus, they transformed the "o terapie pentru schizofrenia interioară la care i-a condamnat comunismul: ruptura dintre eul public, falsificat, şi cel interior, autentic" [internal schizophrenia to which they were condemned by communism: the rupture between the public, falsified self and the internal, authentic one" and, at the same time, the exile was turned into a "*catalizator de identități* şi mai ales *ca o formă de împlinire prin Reacție,* față de mediul de proveniență, ca şi față de cel adoptiv" [*catalyst of identities*, especially *as a form of fulfilment by Reaction* to their environment of origin, as well as to their adoptive one] (Spiridon 1997/1998: 229, 230). This is the positive image of exile. The reverse of the position and condition of an exiled brings into discussion the difficulties of the linguistic and psycho-social habituation, the sometimes violent interaction, at the level of the imaginary and of the representations of identity and alterity that turn the exiled into the ground for confrontation with the self image, with the way he is perceived by the natives – a stranger, an outsider who is not at all welcome. Even if, at lexico-semantic and grammatical level, the language of majority is easy to learn, when spoken by the foreigner, it differs from its actual use and it involves the exiled into a difficult process of forced disillusionment. The attraction of the West is broken by this linguistic barrier which settles all human interactions. While recalling his own experience as an exiled in Holland, Sorin Alexandrescu, the critic and man of culture, defines this placement between worlds, between universes of thought and perception, systems of values and ideas, patterns of social behaviour: "Dificultatea de-a stăpâni acest limbaj mi se pare inutil de subliniat, ea referindu-se nu numai la aspectele gramaticale şi lexicale, ci şi la acelea pragmatice – cum argumentezi, cum te cerți, cum te împaci, cum te impui, cum câştigi la conflict, cum «salvezi fața» când îl pierzi, într-o nouă limbă? – şi mai ales sociale (regulile deciziei, ale politeții, ale manipulării) şi instituționale («cultura» instituției în care intri, pe care niciun coleg nu ți-o explică). A te integra printre majoritari înseamnă a stăpâni aceste sisteme «cam ca ei» în termeni de competență şi eficiență" [It seems useless to point out the difficulty of mastering this language, as it rests not only in the grammatical and lexical aspects, but also in the pragmatic ones – how do you build an argument, how do you quarrel, how do you reconcile, how do you assert yourself, how do you win in a conflict, how do you «save appearances» when you lose, in a new language? – and, particularly, the social aspects (rules of decision, politeness, manipulation) and the institutional ones («the culture» of the institution you join, which no colleague explains to you). To integrate into the majority means to master those systems «quite as they do» in terms of competence and efficiency] (Alexandrescu 2000: 221).

For the Romanian intellectual, the reconfiguration of the set of cultural signs, which allowed the integration into in a certain community in the country of origin, entails, not only their sudden multiplication and diversification, but also a fast

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acquisition of semiotic and, especially, pragmatic competences which are meant to effect an adjustment to the new conditions and, at the same time, to guarantee the preservation of the individual identitary nucleus. What Blanchot calls *the dispersion of the subject* represents, for the exiled, a psychic reality and a certain danger (Blanchot 1986: 29). There are many factors that lead to the loss of internal coherence, which, on the grounds of an identitary narrative turned irrelevant or, even worse, the discriminating label, used to ensure the semantic convergence of all the identity components – perpetually negotiable, it is true – yet, with firm outlines. The first is the *linguistic shock*, joined by the *shock of different thought processes*. In Magda Cârneci's terms, "Franceza cu care vii de acasă e evident o limbă artificială, învățată din cărți şi folosită doar pentru a citi cărți, pentru a vehicula informații abstracte, iar nu pentru a conceptualiza şi a manevra o complexitate socială şi existențială vie, reală. În plus, e o franceză gândită în limba ta natală, plină de «falşi prieteni» şi de calcuri lingvistice fanteziste, e o franceză în definitiv românească. Foarte repede pricepi că această franceză «de laborator» nu-ți e de mare folos şi că trebuie urgent s-o îmbogățeşti şi s-o restructurezi după limba vie, vorbită, «de stradă». Or, ca să începi să vorbeşti cu adevărat o limbă, în felul ei natural, trebuie desigur să începi să gândeşti realmente în structurile ei. Iar ca să gândeşti într-o altă limbă, trebuie să renunți măcar temporar la structurile tale mentale anterioare, altfel spus, să laşi deoparte gândirea pe care limba ta maternă ți-a inculcat-o de la naştere în mod inconştient" [The French you know from home is an artificial language, learnt from books and which was meant to be used only for reading, for managing abstract information, nor for conceptualizing and handling a living, real social and existential complexity. Moreover, it is a French language thought in terms of your own language, full of "false friends" and fanciful loan translations, it is, in the end, a Romanian French. You learn very quickly that this "laboratory" French is quite useless and that you have to enrich it and reorganize it very quickly, according to the live, spoken language "on the street". However, to start using a language appropriately, in its natural way, one must surely start considering things in keeping with its structures. In order to think in a different language, you must renounce, at least temporarily, your previous mental structures, in other words, to leave aside the way of thinking with which you were inculcated since birth by your native language] (Cârneci 1998: 315–316).

Added to this, is *the shock of the masses*, whose effect is anonymity and its complement, loneliness, all leading to a *restructuring of the old you,* a symptom of the disease symbolically called the *decline of identity* (Cârneci 1998: 319). The consequence is double. On the one hand, the individual becomes aware of and free from the deforming identitary illusions, grafted in his intellect by the communist totalitarian ideology. On the other hand, he may fall into the trap of assuming with enthusiasm other marks of identity, equally illusive, since they are borrowed and can never be completely adopted without a deep, irreparable internal break. And perhaps not even then. The (self)reflecting illusion starts, in this case, from the data used by

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the others to identify themselves – and leads to the rewriting of the identitary narrative in order to be to the liking of the new social and cultural life partners.

3. From the formula of autobiographic writing to autofiction. The construction of the scriptural identity

Autobiographic writings have been for some time now in the foreground of the cultural and literary life, and they are a specific brand of the poststructuralist period and also of the repeated attempts to reveal the mechanisms that enable the different systems of ideas, the individual or collective social and cultural representations, the literary texts carrying certain perspectives on mankind and certain cultural or behavioural patterns to build illusions of reality which are reinforced by complex persuasive means. Since they are some of the most subtle and refined forms of manipulation, the literary writings are mainly the object of de-constructive procedures, rejection of inauthenticity, of literary fictionality/fictionalisation, while being complemented by the growing interest in the *biographic genres*, *les écrits personnels* – personal writings or *les littératures intimes* – literatures of intimacy [4] – syntagms that include and synthesize different types of first person writings, of the confession type, which give priority to authenticity, honesty and the direct contact with the reality of the facts, the latter being guaranteed by the self who narrates himself in his personal circumstances and in relation to history. This category of texts brings forth once again a dichotomy that was once eliminated as irrelevant to the study of literature – the one between true and false. Since the witness to the events is also the voice that tells the story, the truth of narrated facts – which is highly subjective, often taking sides and duplicated by a permanent re-configuration of the world from the perspective of the one who narrates himself – should be beyond any doubt.

Regarding things from a different angle, one can easily prove the fact that the attempt to escape from the illusions that were literarily built fails into another illusion – that of the possibility of rendering authentic life in writing, every day life in precise, exact facts, and in the absence of any attempt to shape, transfigure or re-semanticize facts and actors. The fictionalization of the experienced fact starts with its turning into writing. Apparently neutral, the act of writing implies a first step of accommodating the real with the still virtual project of a text about to be written and which already leads the whole writing, unknowingly. Regardless of whether they are retrospective or prospective, the autobiographic writings follow the inherent rule of writing – literary and not only – which introduces a third person – spectral, phantasmal, perceived only by intuition, and yet certain – from the moment when the person who starts his confession projects himself in the object of his confessional discourse and he starts talking about himself to himself and to others as if he were an other. [5]

All biographic genres carry the mark of this duplication of the enunciating self, which is functional regardless of whether they are memoirs, an actual autobiography, an autofictional novel or a journal. Theoreticians and practitioners

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of the critical and hermeneutical undertaking applied to the literature of this kind, highlighted either the signs of auctorial honesty, relying on their authentic value, or the self-delusive games regarding the scriptural (re)construction of the auctorial identity and the world the empirical self went or is going through. For example, Käte Hamburger, in *Logique des genres littéraires*, plainly stated that "le roman a le première personne est un texte ambigu qui imite les discours référentiels et relève donc d'un énoncé de réalité feint: il feint de ressemble a un énoncé véritable" [the novel written in the first person is an ambiguous text which imitates the referential discourses and, thus, it behaves as a false reality statement: it mimics the resemblance to an authentic statement], while autobiography is "une suite d'énoncés véritables puisqu'elle relève d'une énonciation qui se défini par un engagement vis-a-vis de la réalité, et par conséquent d'un discours produit en son propre nom". [a series of authentic statements, as it is based on a process of enunciation which is defined by its commitment to reality and, as a consequence, on a discourse that is produced in its own name] (apud Clerc 2001: 21). To attribute a value of truth to certain autobiographic statements is equal to losing sight of the mimetic effect of the autobiographical writing itself which, as the overtly fictional writing, i.e. a literary, places between brackets an intention of real sincerity – at least at the starting point (if it actually exists there, in the first place). Simulation, sheltered by confession, by an honest (act of) confession follows literature's rules of non-authenticity which imitate in the confessional lyrical poetry, for example, the same attitude – an honest one – of the author's presence which we call lyrical self. With – or without – the author's permission, the rule of a "mimésis de l'échange, fondatrice du genre" (Clerc 2001: 46) settles between the author and his reader thus repeating the communicational situation which is specific to a live, face to face confession.

So as to clarify that what we are considering here is not the intention itself of the one who signs the book, which may be that faithfully rendering the adventures of the self, as much as the adventure of the self as object of the autobiographical writing, we should briefly revise the relation between autobiography and autofiction, sequentially restating well-known perspectives. The autobiographic contract, theorised by Philippe Lejeune is known to be based on the identity of the instances named author, narrator and character. [6] Yet he entrusts the reader with the confirmation of this contract. Mostly a mode of reading rather than a writing strategy, the autobiographical contract can function as such or not. As far as Serge Doubrovsky [7] is concerned, he proposes an alternative contract – the autofictional contract, which recreates reality and turns the real person into a character. If autofiction has the real as a starting point, by including it, changing it, assimilating it and turning it into a sign which can only refer in correlation with the scriptural identity of the subject who narrates himself, autobiography remains dependent on – and partially motivated by – the direct relation with the coordinates of the real. Moreover, autofiction strengthens its latent literary aspect, here, as well as for any autobiographic text through the permissive nature of the narrative – temporal deviations as analepsis and prolepsis place real time between brackets and

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give priority to fictional time, effect and product of writing. In other words, life no longer precedes writing; it is born with it. At the same time, there are consequences of the same writing that we call *honesty* or *effect of reality*. In other words, "autoficțiunea este o ficționalizare a experienței trăite a unui autor care nu-şi asumă niciodată ficționalitatea, textul prezentându-se mereu ca un discurs factual, şi nu ca o întâmplare imaginară. Autoficțiunea este, în esență, o distrugere a graniței dintre realitate şi ficțiune, un discurs aparent autobiografic, dar unde pactul lui Lejeune este continuu contrafăcut prin inexactități referențiale" [autofiction is a fictionalisation of the experience of an author, who never acknowledges fictionality, the text always presenting itself as a factual discourse, not as an imaginary event. Autofiction is, essentially, a destruction of the border between reality and fiction, a discourse which seems autobiographic, yet where Lejeune's contract is continuously distorted by referential inaccuracies] (Khalid, http://yussufkhalid.blogspot.com).

Therefore, starting from the assumption of sincerity, biographic genres prove to be structures with a higher or lower degree of artificiality and, at the same time, creators of referential illusions – since the referent who is believed/professed to be part of real is, to a great extent, the object of the text. As Eugen Simion notes, "scriitura intimă, indiferent de forma ei, este (pare) autentică, credibilă, sinceră…. Pe cât reuşeşte limbajul ei să fie verosimil." [personal writing, regardless of its form, is (seems) authentic, credible, sincere… In as much as its language succeeds in being plausible] (Simion 2002: 30).

As for the journal – whose particularities are of special interest to us, due to the premise of our endeavour – one can ascertain that the authenticity effect is stronger here than it is for memoirs and autobiography – types of writing with retroactive character and restoring purpose – because the writing itself implies a (relative) simultaneity of the living and the writing, a record on the spot of facts and states of mind, placing the accent on the present of the on-going life. Despite all these, the journal – which, theoretically relies especially on the genuineness of the living fact, recorded as such, and on the implicit rejection of any artifice, proves to be, after a careful analysis, another hypostasis of autofiction: "[…] bazându-se pe o ambiguă poetică a spontaneității, fugind de orice formă de ficțiune, jurnalul intim se transformă, când este bine scris şi are ce spune, într-o *formă specială de ficțiune. O autoficțiune, o ficțiune a nonficțiunii*" [relying on an ambiguous poetics of spontaneity, avoiding any kind of fiction, the intimate journal, when it is well written and substantial, turns into a *special type of fiction. An autofiction, a fiction of non-fiction*] (Simion 2002: 225).

Everything can be explained by means of the self-structuring power of the diaristic text which is (relatively) independent of the author's will, of the way in which the autonomy of the writing starts to manifest itself, as the journal is being written, as an independent meaning-form – "neliniştea, frustrările, ambițiile, automatismele sunt captate de pagina de hârtie şi transformate într-o formulă coerentă, a cărei expresivitate autorul nu şi-o poate imagina" [the anxiety, the frustrations, the ambitions, the automatisms are captured by the sheet of paper and turned into a coherent formula, whose eloquence cannot be imagined by the

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author] (Mihăieş 2005: 105). Moreover, "alternanța de confesiune subiectivă şi de obiectivitate materializată în şi prin limbaj, notația jurnalieră îşi creează o ierarhie internă pe cât de aleatorie pe atât de rezistentă la orice încercare de destructurare". [the shift between the subjective confession and the objectivity materialised in and through language, the diaristic record creates its inner hierarchy, as random as resistant to any attempt of dismantling] (Mihăieş 2005:105).

Admitting that one of the implied functions of *the personal writing* is the attempt to know oneself, we have recognize, with Paul Ricoeur, the importance of the interpretative component of self-knowledge act and associate it with the resources that create meanings and representations of the self and of the world, specific to narrativity. Ricoeur believes in the relation of the communicating vessels type, which connects the narrative patterns that guide the narrative in general, to the history of a/some lif(v)e(s). In the terms of the hermeneut, "l'interprétation de soi […] trouve dans le récit, parmi d'autres signes et symboles, une médiation privilégiée; cette dernière emprunte a l'histoire autant qu'a la fiction faisant de l'histoire d'une vie une histoire fictive ou, si l'on préfère, une fiction historique, entrecroisant le style historiographique des biographies au style romanesque des autobiographies imaginaires" [self-interpretation [...] finds, at the level of the narrative, among other signs and symbols, a privileged mediation; the latter borrows the strategies of the historical discourse and those of the fictional one, turning a life's history into a fictional history or, if one prefers, into a historical fiction, resulted from the overlapping of the historiographic style of the biographies with the novelistic style of the imaginary autobiographies] (Ricoeur 1990: 138).

Commenting, afterwards, on the relation between the two components of the self's identity, the *ipse* pole and the *idem* pole, namely, the identity characteristics which compose the stable identitary nucleus, and the characteristics subjected, in time, to negotiations that necessarily involve the others, Ricoeur coins the concept of narrative identity. The concept successfully reunites the identitary transformations suffered by a certain persons self image, and the frame narrative structure which allows a character, between an initial and a final situation, to follow a path of successive (re)construction or (re)constructions. In this way, the life story of a character in writing – considering a character to be a narrative category which performs actions – overlaps the narrative of the self who makes a confession and, by doing so, he constantly brings into discussion his self image. In other words, the narrative identity produced by a confessional writing is born in the interval between the idem pole and the ulterior becomings of the *ipse* pole. [8]

4. Gabriela Melinescu – *Jurnal suedez* or the adventure of the search for the self

Known in the world of Romanian letters as a sensitive poet, with a refined pen, Gabriela Melinescu [10] emigrates to Sweden in 1975, where she continues to write, publishing five volumes of poetry and nine prose volumes [11], and she

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translates into Romanian classical and contemporary Swedish writers. At the same time, she translates into Swedish texts by contemporary Romanian writers, thus, collecting, among others, together with Agneta Pleijel and Dan Shafran, an anthology of Ileana Mălăncioiu's poems.

Gabriela Melinescu's tumultuous existence and her great love stories brought her close, for a while, to the Romanian poet Nichita Stănescu, then to the Swedish editor René Coeckelberg, both having an early death. A very beautiful woman, of Romanian rural and Jewish ethnic descent, the poet had a hard time under the totalitarian ideology, living almost daily under terror, while, later, she adjusted with great difficulty to the Swedish cultural and mentality space, learning the language and practising pluri-linguistic abilities in her many trips through Europe. *The Swedish Journal* [12], in five volumes, relates the uprooting experience and the steps of the forced accommodation to a new Nordic world, one particularly reluctant to foreigners, especially to the ones coming from the East, her great love for René, his illness and sudden death, the pain of surviving her second great love, writing and its vital function, the world of books, drawings and music, the others – René's family, her Swedish writer friends, the world of great or small Belgian, Italian, French, Swedish editors, the Romanian residents in Sweden and the ones who remained in the country, as well as the imaginary home country, associated to feminine patterns of behaviour, as well as to her father's suicide. Reflecting all these, are the supreme spiritual models, Spinoza and Epictetus – steady reference points in a chaotic world, in an insecure balance at the border between the illusions of the spirit and the most intense pragmatism.

Naturally, Gabriela Melinescu's option for the journal type, for the autodiegetic narrative is not a coincidence. If "un choix narratif serait donc toujours en quelque manière idéologique" [a narrative option will always be, to a certain extent, ideological] (Hubier 2003: 11), there is no doubt that the fragmented narrative of the journal, the multiplied self caught in different moments (often of crisis) of his existence reflects the internal dissolution and obsessive quest for a (relatively) new self image, which is, on the one hand, pursuant to the reference points of the adoptive country and, on the other hand, to a balancing solution of the old identitary narrative, strong and alive, despite being pushed to the background. The recurrent returns to the feminine models – especially the mother's sister, the nun Filofteia –, as mediating representations of the abandoned country, are associated to a tumultuous existence, with many trips because of brave René's permanent need for money, who has to earn a living with a small publishing house, and who insists on publishing the most important Romanian writers of the moment and fundamental books of the Swedish culture. Thus, strong internal tensions appear, increased by the drama of René's death, his place being imaginarily taken by a character who resembles him, yet who is only an illusory reflective surface for the pain that is barely endured and for the feminine self in searching for herself, in order to find herself (again) as the wife of the beloved. René's letters, the tribute to friendship – and the Swedish artist friends – creation, naturally, takes the emotional

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and spiritual place remained open, after the dear one's death and after love's certainty and the support were transferred from a hostile world to the imaginary.

Gradually, along the course of the journal's five volumes, the writing becomes self contained, overcoming the personal ideology of the author, who is constantly and consciously deluding herself in order to survive. Thus, a series of narrative-identitary invariables take shape: the themes of the journal, and as many ways of thematizing the self, who, while confessing, begins the scriptural fundamental adventure of her existence.

I. The first volume of the journal already sets up the basic thematic directions of the diaristic writing. Arriving in Sweden after countless failed attempts and with great difficulties, the diarist begins to experiment many simultaneous competitive linguistic identities – Romanian language, which she wilfully wants to keep alive, as it is one of the identitary-foundational marks; French, the language of love and communication with René; and Swedish. Each linguisitic regime she embarks upon resizes and rewrites her, yet illusively, at the level of appearances. This is the reason why the writer searches, from the beginning, the original, Adamic language, the one that preserves the spirit of words and the connection with the sacred. The illusive, superficially-significant cover of the linguistic signs is useful only for daily communication, not for the vital transfer from soul to soul, or much less, for creation. During this quest for this internal, profound language, the diarist identifies temporarily and partially with hypostases of the self obtained through the (self)mirroring function of the writing, since the quest for logos is equivalent, for a writer structured on romantic coordinates, to the quest for the self. [13] Accordingly, the autobiographic writing becomes "bien davantage un moyen de s'inventer qu'une méthode pour se retrouver" [even more a way of inventing and retracing oneself], that is "un jeu identitaire (et mise en abyme) entre identification et détachement" [an identity game (and a placement in the abyss) between identification and detachment] (Hubier 2003: 114).

In parallel with Romanian language, which is deeply rooted in the immanence of her soul, the diarist has at hand the linguistic play that is equally illusive, although sublime in its innocent-artistic way, of Pierre Zekeli, a refined aristocart with mixed ethnic origins, the son of a Swedish ambassador to Romania, who speaks a Romanian with an interwar flavour, "limba română a unui poet care a învățat limbi străine numai prin poezie" [the Romanian language of a poet who has learnt foreign languages only through poetry] (Melinescu 2000: 9).

The problem of the language is, after all, the fundamental problem of a writer, which becomes keener because of exile. Yet, reality is built as and addition – a juxtaposition – contamination of fragments (this is also the structure of the diaristic writing) where nothing is stable. Refusing to accept the truth of an illusion means not confusing illusion with reality – and all reality is an illusion – with the only genuine state of facts, the one that is hidden behind the usual functioning and the notional cover of words. Accordingly, there is a search for the secret source of languages – the virtual, universal, undifferentiated linguistic model where the word

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becomes and is altogether reality and experience – and the male prototypes, Spinoza and Epictetus, masters of avoiding the illusive game with appearances. [14] Far from random, this language of (all) origins is associated to representations of motherhood, perceived as forms of symbolic coagulation of the original linguistic resources. [15] The collection of Bibles written in all languages, that the diarist puts together with great perseverance, reflects, as well as the constant preoccupation with symbolism and the fragments of dramatic living which are sublimated both in the body and essence of words, from David's *Psalms*, or for poetry as vital activity, not so much a surface knowledge of multiple languages, as the same concern for the archaic content, universally valid, of all languages of the world, called to name the fundamental truths of being.

The secret life of letters, retrievable at the innocent (in its first, original meaning), ludic [16] level, the meditation upon the sacred symbolism of Hebrew letters [17] which places man within the great cosmic mechanism, in direct relation with the sacred, as well as the initiatic experience of the contact with Swedish language, in its written (apparently) stable form, the dictionary – seen as a story which condenses in its writing simultaneity all the ages of language – are as many attempts to overcome appearances.

The issue of creation, inseparable from that of language, is equal to a regressive spiritual motion, which is directed towards the original linguistic resources targeted by dictionaries, by taking an inventory of the words' semantic ages, as well as the oldest books of mankind, the philosophy books or the absolute masterpieces of universal literature. The diurnal faces of the self draw back so as to make way for the deep hypostases of the being connected, in Gabriela Melinescu's case, to her native language. Regarded as the access way to the root of the world and the self, beyond the diversity of linguistic manifestations, which can, sometimes, endanger the inner coherence of the creative spirit, Romanian language either certifies, by its presence, the diarist's power of creation and vital engagement, or it creates anxiety when the writer drifts away form the vivid words flow. Accordingly, *dwelling* in many languages becomes possible – the act of translation is a case in point. Altogether with her native language, the diarist carries within herself her own identitary narration – the past being profoundly affected by the history of a whole collective who lived under a dictatorship, where the rebel *amazonism* of the female part of the family is balanced by the father's suicidal option and the lost myth of childhood. [18] Not surprisingly, the exile changes all these tragic avatars of the self in sources of vitality, necessary in a foreign land. This way, the scriptural profile of the self appears progressively, carrying multiple facets, placed at the confluence between past history recalled for its role of necessary acknowledgment of the individual to herself – confronted now with foreigners, the Nordic people, and a second identitary narration, which is always subjected to negotiations, in progress, result of the attempt to accommodate to the new world. The self-revealing function of the journal – seen as "recueil d'épiphanies" of the self (Hubier 2003: 60) consists of finding a justification for the act of writing (herself), the confession being directed not to the exterior, as to

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the inner motivations of the diarist's actions, to the relevance of the idea of the sacred for each destiny, and to the role of the others – family, friends, strangers – in the process of self-knowledge. Fundamentally, the association of fragmentarism and the randomness of life with the discontinuous structure of the journal discourse is achieved under the guidance of the idea of an exemplary existence which gives a semantic motivation to the narrative and directs it towards the literary fiction. [19]

In this situation, the issue of authenticity must be reconsidered, and the identity games that were supported, at the level of writing, by the occurrence of the pronominal forms identifying the fluid hypostases of the narrative actors, lose their deictic relevance. In other words, they create the illusion of the real which is specific to literary fiction.

The encounter with the others has rather negative consequences: emotionally, intellectually and morally. On the background of the Swedes' general suspicion towards foreigners, especially political refugees from Eastern Europe – although, René himself, a Trotskyist in his youth, and other Swedish intellectuals have left wing political opinions – Gabriela Melinescu feels as if thrown in a world that is spiritually ill, deprived of the kindness and love that define the most profound humanity, a country of depressed people, addicted to ritualistic psychiatric sessions, who embody the main features of the Nordic spirit. Accommodation is the more difficult as the diarist proclaims her profound need for sun, light, warmth, suitable to her impetuous, Mediterranean spirit. The solution found is the prayer of the heart, repeated constantly in her mind, in the crucial moments of life, as well as habitually, because it brings time closer, it tames it, it reduce its gravity and gives it new meaning as a trajectory of life. A form of disillusionment – or of peaceful cohabitation with the illusion of endurance of the human – the prayer of the heart is a form of spiritual escape and compensation for any trauma of being.

Situated in a symbolic register, Sweden belongs to a cultural geography [20] of which the diarist is completely unaware. Beyond its real borders, the symbolic ones – much stronger in the imaginary war between the Swedes and all foreigners – reveal the real image of local people who are not too willing to democratically accept mixed families and foreign residents to Sweden. The different treatment of non-Swedes destroys a strong social and cultural illusion related to tolerance and the democratic life regime in the Nordic country. Several levels of differences exist – between the Swedes and other Nordic people, between the Swedes and the rest of Europe – René comes from a mixed family, with a Swedish mother and a Jewish Flemish father, a family torn by tension and hate, between the Swedes and the Eastern European as well.

As for the diarist – whose intellectual vocation is openly European, on the background of the archaic feeling of communion with everything that implies the creation of the sacred, which was inherited on a maternal line, and of the tendency to rebuild the imaginary homeland in almost any place in Europe – she has a hard time enduring the Swedish xenophobia and the extremist neo-fascist manifestations. Although the Swedes are elitists, their country brings together, in the Swedish language classes, people of different nations and cultural identities: the American

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Johanna, the French Sophie or the Japanese Eiko, who is married to a Swede. Yet, the discriminating and hypocritical attitude of the greatest majority of Swedes makes the communication between cultures difficult and it differs from the kindness of the Belgians (René is a Belgian citizen) and the good will of the Italians, while being similar to the Swiss intolerance to Germans. In other words, the land of the adoptive country proves to be the one of discrepancies and of the ethnic, linguistic and mentality differences that often prove irreconcilable when they appear.

II. The second volume of *Swedish Journal* opens with a meta-confessional sequence, where the diarist names the main discursive strategy of writing – the spatialization of time by overlapping the fragments of existence with the patterns of the self-identifying narrative, an almost schizophrenic split between the needs of the self and the commitment to others, as well as the transcription of the terrible pain caused by René's death. On this troubled background, the inevitable tensions of the status of exiled are intensified and the compensating force of writing increases. Writing in exile becomes writing about exile: the external, physical, as well as the inner exile, inherent to the status of the writer forced to write in a different language and who is aware of the inconsistency of the worldly things – "L'écriture devient ainsi le moyen par lequel exorciser l'exil, décortiquer et analyser cette expérience afin de chercher une réponse, de trouver la liberté tant souhaitée et, apparemment, si difficile à atteindre. Le terrain de l'écriture semble être le seul espace permettant à l'écrivain de se sentir libre et de se forger une appartenance qui franchit toute frontière géographique et linguistique" [Thus, writing becomes the means of exorcising the exile, to uncover and analyse it, so as to search for an answer, to find the freedom so longed for and, apparently, so hard to achieve. The space of writing seems to be the only one that allows the writer to feel free and to build an identity that goes beyond all geographical and linguistic frontiers] (Marchese http://phantasma.ro/wp/?p=2454).

Exile, as a form of escape from one's self and from the world, beyond time and the space-time and moral constraints, has this journal as a form of manifestation, its structure starting to reconfigure itself as an essay. Much more obvious here than in the first volume, is the presence of the two narrators that Eugen Simion mentions – the one who remembers and the other one who relives and writes, synthesising a whole month in a few paragraphs. More than ever before sincerity becomes a strategy of the diaristic discourse, and authenticity is to be found in aesthetic register without being of consequence as such, as much as an "adecvare la exigențele limbajului confesiv" [adaptation to the exigencies of the confessional language] (Simion 2002: 122, 129, 143) Here, fragmentarism is not a signal of insecurity, of the provisionality as the state of the self who is searching for herself, as of the steps of a painful initiation in the coexistence with death, the uncertainties that become rules of existence, at the same time as the crush of the most powerful illusion so far, love.

The themes of the journal are the same, yet more acute. In Lucerne, Switzerland, the diarist painfully experiences the linguistic conflict – French remains the sublime

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code of love, Swedish is the instrument of communication with others, and Romanian, pushed at the end, hurts as an open wound. Illusive this time also, the use of plurilingualism in reality strains to the maximum the existential thread of the creative being, whose hypostases can barely find their inner reconciliation. The deep linguistic substance for each language allows access in different ways. Beyond the sterile chain of signs, a language has the secret of absolute existence, which is accessible, intuitively, only to initiates. Therefore, to write in French is equal to finding water under the sands of the desert, while in Romanian language, similar to a savannah, "fructe și flori îmi cădeau firesc în gură și pe brațe, ca într-un spațiu vrăjit" [fruits and flowers were falling in my arms so naturally as if in a magical space], writes the diarist (Melinescu 2003: 15). And, once again, writing in French means reconstructing your self, deliberately imposing it a *trope* which is foreign to its nature. A product of the Bildungsroman type of narration, this trope refines in it all the avatars of the self, which insist on crushing all semantic barriers that block the way to the profound spirit of a language, at the expense of its own de-formation and re-formation. Cioran's model is eloquent from this point of view. [21]

Other times, the fight for the assimilation of the Swedish language can lead to a positive duality of the self, who feels in it the beatings, the vibrations and vitality of the new code of being. And the transfer, in the literary writing, of the identitary dilemmas of the exiled secretly aims at its metamorphosis in a Swedish writer who perceives her adoptive country chromatically with the fresh eye of the other, and the imaginary homeland, Romania, through the emotional grid of the Amazonian femininity.

Therefore, the function of writing rests in integration of the plural reality, often chaotic or threatening, into a surreality much more *real*, as its supra-temporal and supra-spatial nature allows the erasure of all the frontiers between the self and the world, between the self and the others, as well as, the convergence of all partial and temporal representations of the self. Thus, each individual is only a "Don Quijote în infinite exemplare, călare pe spatele calului iluzie". [Don Quixote in infinite instances, on the back of the illusive horse] (Melinescu 2003: 228).

The mechanisms of cultural self-delusion – in a positive sense, this time – are numerous. The pages of the journal condense the coordinates of possible canon of European writers living in exile, who converted the estrangement into elements of an emotional syntax that guides the re-arrangement of the real. Thus, Musil and Jean-Jacques Rousseau share the same space, each of them with his own journey of initiation into the exile, as into a creative resource of reaction type to the constraints of the new way of life. Fernando Pessoa joins them with his complex, multiple and mysterious self, eluding the real through fictional characters "din panteonul intim, care l-au ajutat să-și viseze viața mai mult decât s-o trăiască, fiind în același timp elegiac, epic, erotic și mistic" [from the intimate pantheon, who helped him dream his life rather than live it, being at the same time elegiac, epic, erotic and mystical] (Melinescu 2003: 186). Similar to the Portuguese writer, the diarist undergoes a process of narrativization of the inner and external adventures

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of the self, which are marked, as we have already shown, by the relationship with the beloved man, by the act of creation, by the friendships, etc. The fragmented structure provides each narration thus constituted with sufficient autonomy, while also connecting it with the whole, under the authority of the great themes of the journal, enhanced, in their turn, by the specular function of the image of the spiritual masters, assumed, as such, by the diarist. [22] Therefore, "funia iluziilor" [the rope of illusions] (Melinescu 2003: 217) – that ties her to reality and which becomes more obvious in the moments when the diarist receives good reviews from the specialized critics, after the translation from French to Swedish of the novel *Arborele în vânt / The Tree in the Wind* is published – has its correspondent in the illusion created by the work of art, as Delacroix defines it. [23] The abandonment, as an act of will, of the illusions of the real and the settlement within the illusory sphere of art conditions the act of creation and stands for the counterpart of the romantic search for an ideal – the language of origins – achieved tangentially and with revealing effects in the privileged moments of the creative process. One should mention here the words of Paul Klee's journal, where the diarist can recognize herself: "Tu ca individ nu serveşti nimănui, tu eşti inutil, trebuie să ştii să-ţi creezi scopuri utile. Joacă-te, fă-ţi iluzii pentru tine şi pentru alţii, fii artist". [You, as an individual, are good for no one, you are useless, you need to know how to establish useful goals. Play, dream for yourself and for others, be an artist] (Melinescu 2003: 97).

The diarist's entire admiration is directed towards another immigrant from the East, the Russian Brodski, a laureate of the Nobel prize, who, while living in the United States, translates his own poems from Russian into English, writes essays on Russian literature and teaches at the university. All under the sign of the admiration for the English language – "e ca şi cum prin engleză ai primi puterea de a vedea realitatea drept în ochi" [it is as if through English you get the power to see reality straight in the eye] (Melinescu 2003: 173). The translations from diarist's own texts create a second text, a type of palimpsest, where, from the peaceful coexistence of the two languages, results a new relation of the signifier and the signified, which proves inefficient in all the individual languages. The initial text fuses with the second, towards which it partially aims, while also differentiating itself from it by means of the imaginary and of the tone carried by the other language, English. "Poezia, dar chiar şi arta eseului, fiind în primul rând ton, aceasta face ca întâlnirea cu diferite limbi să fie fericită în cazul în care poetul e stăpân pe arta sa şi extrem de entuziast pentru noua limbă, aşa cum este Brodski" [Poetry, and even the art of the essay, being firstly tone, this makes the meeting with different languages to be a happy one, if the poet is master of his own art and extremely enthusiastic about the new language, the way Brodski is] (Melinescu 2003: 172). This is an admirable (self)-portrait of the creative self trapped between the parallel mirrors of the cultural models and the characters who give life to the writing.

Significant for its relevance on the identity of the exiled, in general, is the situation of the speakers of Swedish who come back to the country after some time and notice the aging of the language they once used – it is the case of René's

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parents, Lionel and Linnéa, he a Jewish Fleming converted to Christianity, who became a reverend, she a Swede by birth. Gabriela Melinescu's situation is not different, since, when she comes back to the country after 1989, she is faced with the fear of having lost contact with the living Romanian language.

From a social and ethnic perspective, the Swedes remain intolerant with foreigners, which becomes obvious after the prime-minister, Olof Palme, is assassinated on the 1st of March 1985. [24] Partial, when it comes to foreigners, the Swedes are seen by the diarist with the unscrupulous eye of the foreigner for whom the domination of reason in all areas of life, the rigidity and the concealment of their effects under the mask of social conventions are generally accepted commandments. On the other hand, the self-imposed spiritual sterility reverberates in its reverse: the sinking into alcohol – "pentru a uita de sine, a deveni într-un fel de regim nocturn al ființei un altul, un străin iresponsabil de faptele sale […]" [so as to forget oneself, to become in a sort of a nocturnal domain being an other, a foreigner who is not responsible for his actions] (Melinescu 2003: 126). Still, there are mixed families made of Swedes and non-Swedes, as well as the Turkish family of Lütfi Ozkök, a famous photographer in Sweden, married to a Swedish woman and father of several children. However, tortured by the problem of language as an instrument of communication, Lütfi confesses his lack of adherence to the specificity of Swedish – a language as intolerant as its native speakers.

III. The third volume of the journal bears the mark of a counter-life lived in the imaginary and through diaristic writing, since the overwhelming solitude after René's death threatens the self with dissolution. The letters sent by the beloved man, while the diarist was still living in Romania, ensure a form of spiritual survival, the entrance into a new life, with other characters, through an illusion. At the border between existence and non-existence, between being with the loved one and not being at all, in his absence, Gabriela Melinescu reinvents herself once more, the way she used to do while creating, with René, from a distance, a love story in words. Rewriting life means, at this point, both living it again and reinventing it. The narrator, who recollects, becomes now the instrument in the creative reconstruction of a love story and of a scriptural profile assumed by the narrator of the story. [25] The condition for this rewriting of life starting with death is the departure from reality and the dispersion of the self in many instances, all of them compensating and transitory. Helped by the blockage of the primary deictic relevance of the personal pronoun in the first person singular and the creation of a new one, resulting from the projection of a communication situation in virtuality, the diarist commemorates (her) emotional death as a starting point for a new life as a couple. Two *old* people are part of the new existence, representatives of the Jewish roots revisited by the diarist in moments of great despair, while searching for ancestral identitary landmarks. Andrei Bart and Lionel, René's father, "sunt cei doi tați «bătrâni»" [are the two «old» fathers] who kaleidoscopically reflect the image of the departed (Melinescu 2004: 46). The entire diaristic writing will convert, from now on, into a search, under many forms, of the lost lover.

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The acute absence of love or, better said, of the illusion of love, as well as the suffering that results from it, are turned into art – "fiecare carte scrisă, fiecare desen, chiar şi traducerile sunt fructe ale singurătăţii, «călătorii» în alte spaţii ale altor egouri fascinante" [each written book, each drawing, even translations are the fruit of loneliness, «trips» to other spaces of other fascinating selves] and appreciated in the continuous process of searching and knowing of the self (Melinescu 2004: 44). Often using rear projection on itself, placing into brackets both the present and the reality wherefrom the strongest and the most beautiful of all illusions – love – is resorbed into nothingness, she analyses the referential pact – "par lequel l'auteur s'engage à être le plus véridique que possible" [by which the author engages herself to be as veridical as possible] (Clerc 2001: 25), so as to accentuate "le degré de ressemblance (auquel) le texte pretend" [the degree of resemblance that the text anticipates] (*ibidem*) By multiplying itself, the image of the creative self, attenuates the love, the suffering caused by René's disappearing, by means of the identity drift supplemented by the great number of dreams, which transfer and preserve in the onirical space. Self-delusion, thus, acquires emotionally-curative virtues and it allows the avoidance of the connections with reality and the others, in order to connect the self to non-being. [26]

Lionel's death occasions other meditations on the theme of love and human forms of self-delusion, which dissimulate everyone's irreversible ending. The confrontation with the languages remains one of diarist's constant ways of being. By writing her short stories in Swedish, she notices the way Romanian and French insinuate into the text, providing the expressions suited for the authority and for the identitary-emotional charge they possess. Similarly, the joy residing in comparing the translations of *Divina Commedia*, of each language that carries the deep meanings of the text and the translator's spiritual profile, opens, once again, the way to overcoming the phenomenal, the linguistic transitoriness, towards the original linguistic matrix. Writing and translating (oneself) in another language can often be an ordeal and a burden difficult to carry. Nabokov, Conrad, Cioran, Brodski, Milosz are as many examples in this respect. And as many reflective surfaces, where the self in motion shapes its image. [27]

Comparing, at some point, the specificity of the Swedish language with Romanian, the diarist remarks the metronome precision of the former, the pragmatism and its complete connection to reality, the precision in placing the individual in space and time. The native language, on the other hand, nourishes the vague, the illusive and the nuance, encouraging the intuitive access to what is beyond the phenomenal, in the depths of the spirit. The descent into the deep semantics of words, facilitated by the Romance languages, explains the diarist's passion for Latin. *A language of the dead,* while also a matrix for so many *living languages*, Latin seems to be, now, the access path to man's profound, stable and eternal self, in a direct relation with the sacred. The trauma caused by living in many languages at the same time, as well by the total abandonment of the native one in favour of the borrowed language is obvious both for the Polish Maciej Zaremba, who claims that he completely has given up his native language, as well

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as for René's mother, Linnéa, a Swede who returned to her native country after many years and who uses an old, useless language as an instrument for communication.

The dissimulated forms of Swedish racism, or, sometimes, the French, are quite frequently brought into discussion along with the issue of exile. Immigrants from former French colonies, who came in one of the world's cultural capitals hoping for better lives, fully experience, while pushed on the edge of society, the drama of the impossibility to adapt to a profoundly foreign culture. It is not the only example of self-delusion. Andrei Bart's son, with a Swedish mother, converted to Judaism and settled in Israel, lives the drama of non-adherence and the confrontation with two distinct identitary narratives and two cultural and linguistic identities – the maternal one, rejected, and the paternal one, which eludes him precisely because of his mixed origin. And, as the individual is nothing outside his own narrative, which pre-determines him, justifies and identifies him in respect to the others, his father fears that his son might commit suicide.

As for Gabriela Melinescu, her return to Romania, after many years, transforms her in what Sorin Alexandrescu calls *romstrăin/romforeigner* (Alexandrescu 2000: 301–304). The return to the real space of *the first life* (Melinescu 2004: 256) is equal to a second de-countrification. Since, the imaginary country – that "punct iradiant, stabil […]", "un izvor din care țâşnesc culori, mirosuri, chipuri, răni de nevindecat ca sinuciderea tatălui meu, moartea mamei, la înmormântarea căreia n-am putut să vin […]" [radiant, stable point […], a spring of colours, smells, faces, un-healing wounds, like my father's suicide, my mother's death, whose funeral I could not attend […]" (Melinescu 2004: 256–258) becomes, from now on, part of an identitary history completely gone. Moreover, the contract with Romanian language in its home immediately detects the deviation of the Romanian spoken in Sweden, its sterility and passivity towards "melodia limbii, acel flux vital, plin de pitoresc şi neaşteptate creații ale limbii vorbite" [the melody of language, that vital flow, full of picturesque and unexpected creations of the spoken language"] (Melinescu 2004: 295). That language, which determines, more than anything, the act of creation and motivates the creator's existence.

IV. The fourth volume of the journal centres, once more, on the issue of reconstructing the self from the games of memory, of the text and of writing, on the ever more accentuated coordinates of life's onirical dimension. The strictly managed contacts with others are the main poles of the inner stage in which the creative self, acting as a character in its text, experiments with possible identities that perform a compensating-idealizing function. Thus, starting with the conviction that the narrativized sentiments make great literature, the diary-writer grants herself the opportunity of a symbolic compensation by a self-projection in writing, which, as it embeds facts from reality, it sublimates them and re-articulates them as part of an exemplary emotional history. The power of literature to surpass real existence, to offer it patterns and models of behaviour, solutions and answers to deep questions makes Strindberg's writing, for example, a moral compass and a life guidebook.

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Nonetheless, any writer's creative strain is tied to her mother tongue – to which Gabriela Melinescu pays constant homage, perfectly aware of the spiritually-formative function played by language. Communicable in infra-reality, from beyond the sounds, native language is more than the corollary and receptacle of a culture, it is "limba fără limbă. Misterul maternității. Dumnezeu trebuie să fie o femeie, o Atotputernică Născătoare de Dumnezeu" [the language without language. The mystery of maternity. God must be a woman, an All-powerful Mother of God] (Melinescu 2008: 181). "Embrion de lumină fotonică" [Embryo of photonic light] (Melinescu 2008: 162), "tonul astral" [the astral tone] (Melinescu 2008: 163) of the native tongue bars the access of Swedish language within the depths of being. For that reason, the diary author writes, instinctively, prose in Swedish, a permissive and unpretentious genre, and for the same reason she observed the accentuation of the race and culture differences caused by the same attempt *to place oneself within* Swedish language, in the case of the African poet Cletus Nelson.

The strength of the maternal language acts decisively on the process of creation, forcing the accommodation of the borrowed language with its authoritarian spirit and favouring, by means of this exact superiorly-creative dimension of the cohabitation of two languages, the irreducible originality of the literary writing. And if, sometimes, Swedish reclaims its priority, the diary writer finds refuge in painting or in graphic work – in the contours, shapes and colours which bring her closer, as universal language of the soul, to the imaginary homeland and to the childhood imagined as golden age when all people speak Romanian.

The "transcription of the intimate space" (Ioana Petrescu: http://www.observatorcultural.ro/Exil-si-emigrare-o-dragoste-conflictuala*articleID _13244-articles _details.html) also includes the act of translation, seen as a means to take distance from one's self and to conform, at least partially, to the rules of a different writing. But "a traduce cărțile altora este şi el un fel de a trăi" [to translate the books of others is also a way to live] (Melinescu 2008: 264).

In some lines preserved in the pages of the journal, the author calls, directly or obliquely, the dominants of her state of mind. She carries with her a "o durere fără nume"[pain with no name] (Melinescu 2008: 106) in the northern city, covered in snow, which refracts, sometimes, in a visceral repulsion towards men, as well as towards women – "unii au început să miroasă urât, iar celelalte par deşucheate" [some have started to smell fowl, and the others seem debauched] (Melinescu 2008: 119) –, and other times force her, similar to Proust's madeleine, to look for a stimulant to help her retrieve, from memory, the tastes and smells from childhood. The therapy through writing is the guarantee of freedom in regard to others, and with herself, as well as of protection offered by the act of writing against the danger of the being's lack of motivation: "atunci când scrii, le scapi tuturor, în primul rând eu scap de mine însămi, de senzația teribilă de nonsens, că sunt un pai în joaca vântului, pe care nimeni şi nimic nu-l mai poate fixa într-un loc. Am nevoie de litere, de cuvinte, pentru a-mi forma un sistem de iluzii, urme ale faptului că m-am mirat că sunt" [when you write, you evade everyone, firstly I evade myself, from the terrible feeling of nonsense, that I am a straw in the wind, that no

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one and nothing can fix in one place anymore. I need letters, words to form a system of illusions, traces of the fact that I wondered at being] (Melinescu 2008: 15). Regarded, then, from the other side, the Swedish, the double/multiple identity of the author is reconfigured in terms of the absent country. The northern, this time. Sweden's presence, as an identity space, spiritually and emotionally assimilated, gathers in the being of friend Inga, during a walk through Cişmigiu Park, in the centre of Bucharest. The palimpsestic juxtaposition of ages, states and emotions, like in an inner text caught *in actu*, brings together old stages of life, the love for the poet Nichita Stanescu, chance meetings with poet friends at the time – inner luggage which lends to the geographic and intellectual wanderings of the writer a sense of stability, reassurance, even though slightly melancholic.

And once more, the psychological stability guaranteed by the presence of Romanian language in the most profound human essence makes it possible for the identity narrative, that the author permanently negotiates with her self and with the others, to become text: "trebuie neapărat să aud limba română vorbită, numai ea mă poate inspira şi-mi poate da aripi ca să « compun » şi eu ceva nou" [I greatly need to hear Romanian language spoken; it is the only one that can inspire me and can give me wings to "compose" something new] (Melinescu 2008: 279). The chance given to self-knowledge and self-reflection, the presence of the other makes from alterity a dialogue (or conflict) partner, sometimes tense, sometimes affectionate. [28]

The mismatch with the fog of the Scandinavian countries and with the depressive states it induces brings back into discussion different life spaces and cultural/existential models. Born under the sign of creative vitality, the author does not accept the psychological pressure of the climate, of darkness (winter, in Sweden, daytime lasts until shortly after noon) and differences in mentality – "m-am născut sub semnul luminii şi căldurii, îmi stă atât de rău să fiu tristă, îi stă rău oricui la vârsta mea. Numai tinerilor le stă bine bosumflaţi, trişti şi în lacrimi. Bătrânii trebuie să lucească din soarele interior, cel care e sinonim cu iubirea" [I was born under the sign of light and warmth, it doesn't suit me at all to be sad, it doesn't suit anyone of my age. It suits only young people to be pouty, sad, and in tears. The elders must shine from the sun within, that which is synonymous with love] (Melinescu 2008: 13). And it is not about the feeling itself, but about the state of falling in love which is germinative, inducing the creative state and alimenting it.

The distancing from *svenskhet* – the Swedish social code, proved, thanks to René's protection, beneficial. And it made possible the supra-ethnic dialogue, in the universal language of art – "prietenii mei sunt universali, artişti de elită, trimişi de destin" [my friends are universal, elite artists, sent by destiny] (Melinescu 2008: 22). Otherwise, the status of an immigrant to Sweden is not always favourable. During a meeting with students, at the Uppsala University, together with Madeleine Grive (the author of a literary anthology of immigrant writers in Sweden, and who does not shy away from breast-feeding her four-month old daughter, Siri, during the conference), Gabriela Melinescu, Li Li, a Chinese poet, the Kurd Mehmet Uzun take the floor – all of them perceived, by the autochthonous public as "peşti exotici care reuşiseră să se

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adapteze apelor reci şi neprimitoare ale patriei lor" [exotic fish, who had managed to adapt to the cold and inhospitable waters of their country] (Melinescu 2008: 37).

The dual relation with the linguistic instrument, Swedish, and the always present Romanian become tense sometimes: "starea mea de «spânzurat» când trebuie să scriu în altă limbă, strangulare resimțită prin propria limbă maternă, care nu te lasă să pleci undeva fără să fie şi ea luată ca suport" [my state of being "hanged" when I need to write in another language, strangulation felt through my own mother tongue, that won't let you go somewhere without taking it as basis] (Melinescu 2008: 79). However, other times, the linguistic and spiritual background is provided by Romanian, perhaps even French – the language of her love for René – reanimates and refreshes Swedish. For that reason, perhaps, the collection of short-stories published in Swedish enjoys a good reception by the public.

And, once more, love – the endless one, which can lead to suicide. It happens to the ballerina Irinel Liciu, the wife of the Romanian poet Ştefan Augustin Doinaş, who cannot conceive life without the man she loves. Or, in other words, in Gabriela Melinescu's version: "moartea unui iubit nu este moartea vieții – dimpotrivă, cu cât ai mai mulți «iubiți» (oameni dragi) pe lumea cealaltă, cu atât mai mult frica de a muri se diminuează şi moartea devine o sărbătoare a întâlnirilor, un fel de somn lung, cu o trezire care nu poate să fie decât o enormă surpriză" [the death of a loved one is not the death of life – by the contrary, the more "lovers" (loved ones) you have on the other side, the less fear of death you feel and death becomes a celebration of meetings, a sort of long sleep that can only be an enormous surprise] (Melinescu 2008: 266).

V. "Strategia fundamentala a jurnalului intim" [the fundamental strategy of the personal diary] was, for Mircea Mihăieş, "a concilia identitatea şi alteritatea" [to reconcile identity and alterity] by constructing an *auctor in fabula* "care este totodată şi subiectul exercițiului confesiv" [who is, simultaneously, the subject of the confessional exercise] (Mihăieş 2005:148). In the fifth volume of the *Swedish Journal*, fictionalizing herself as producer of the statements about herself and others, and as theme of writing, this character, which takes shape from the games with the text's explicit or implicit identity core, enters, willingly, an equation of self-delusion. Because all "elementele de real sunt, odată transcrise în pagina de jurnal, doar un *efect al realului*, pe când partea de ficțiune se transformă într-o realitate de gradul al doilea" [elements of the real are, once written on the page of a diary, only an *effect of the real*, while the fictional part transforms into a second degree reality]. In this reality, the main actors – the self of the author, in constant process of self-discovery, and the others, friends or enemies – are joined by the words from the two dominant languages, Romanian and Swedish. They both support and, partially, fuel identity narratives often in conflict, narratives of the inner self that perceives the native language as an inner language, somewhat inaccessible in Sweden, where they speak an amputated, barren Romanian. And Swedish as a state of the intellect, providing/suggesting axiomatic sentences full of wisdom or bookish formulas. Hey both represent linguistic solutions for being in the

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world, for translating yourself always to the understanding of others. Other times, however, the cohabitation with the above-mentioned linguistic pair induces a state of inner tension growing into torture – "existența mea este în toate privințele îngrozitoare, plină de paroxism prin efortul de a mă ține vie în două culturi, în două limbi, în două țări care îmi sunt străine. Cu excepția momentelor când scriu în aceste limbi sau citesc, sau numai răsfoiesc dicționarele – celelalte momente sunt pline de angoasă, de îndoieli, de disperarea de a nu fi niciunde" [my existence is terrible in all ways, full of paroxysm in the effort to keep me alive in two cultures, in two languages, in two countries which are foreign to me. With the exception of the moments when I write in these languages or I read, or only browse dictionaries – the other moments are full of anguish, of doubt, of the despair of being nowhere] (Melinescu 2010: 14). The solution for this state of spiritual crisis is found by the writer in the in the existential purpose of translation. A bridge between destinies, translation becomes self-translation and re-reading of her own life through someone else's discourse. Thus, the fragments of verses translated and inserted in the discourse of the diary become metatexts that concern the scriptural profile of the self and the text that carries it: "Tu ai închis ochii, / ce mai rămâne? // Ce ai vrut tu să fie / în tine mai mult decât tu însuți? // Chiar şi păsările în interior / cântau lin şi foarte încet / Lumina făcuse o haltă / precum cineva venit de departe. // Ca un copil fără cuvânt / care se miră şi îți seamănă // fără să te recunoască" [You closed your eyes, / what else remains? // What did you want to be / in you more than yourself? // Even the birds inside / sang gently and so softly / The light had made a halt / like someone from afar. // Like a child with no word / who wonders and resembles you // without knowing you] – text translated by the author from French (Melinescu 2010: 27–28). Or the response letter from Andrei Zanca, to whom the author had sent her novel, *Acasă printre străini* [*At Home in a Foreign Land*], and who proposes a reading grid which can function as an innovative *mise en abîme* for Gabriela Melinescu's entire journal, but most particularly for this fifth part. We select an illustrative fragment from the letter, as it captures the conjoinment of West and East, diffuse and yet strong, from the windings of the text and, particularly, from the structure of her creative spirit: "Există aici, ca în zen, o contopire integrală, o identificare până la epuizarea rostirii cu subiectul descris, efectuată în retorta lăuntrică mediată de contemplare şi ascultare (cartea câştigand în armonie, tocmai prin delicatul echilibru dintre văz, de esență occidentală – analitic, disecție –, şi auz, de esență cu precădere orientală – o absorbție a întregului – elemente atât de definitorii în filozofia, religia şi cultura acestor două emisfere polare, geograficul însuşi denotând astfel trăsături antropomorfe)" [There is, here, as in Zen, a complete merger, an identification to the exhaustion of speech with the described topic, achieved in the inner retort mediated by contemplation and listening (the book gaining in harmony, directly from the delicate balance between sight, of Western inspiration – analytic, dissection – and hearing, of predominant Eastern inspiration – an absorption of the

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whole – elements highly characteristic of the philosophy, religion and culture of these two polar hemispheres, geography itself, thus, denoting anthropomorphic features.] (Melinescu 2010: 46).

Sometimes desperately searching for herself, the journal writer is forced to abandon the oases of spirituality that serve her as refuge and to show herself in the space of social existence, in the capital of Sweden, where people carefully maintain a semblance of normality and morality, under the conditions of a strong anti-Semitism, well dissimulated, by commemorating the Auschwitz victims. And of a stabile and firm intolerance to strangers – the presence of the diary writer in a Lutheran church only sharpens the carefully hidden bigotry, racism and anti-Semitism of the common Swedes.

Having become "o oglindă involuntară a eului" [an involuntary mirror of the self], "adică forma cea mai complexă de autocunoaştere" [that is, the most complex form of self-discovery], the journal records, like an *ad hoc* barometer, all the ups and downs of the inner life and, secondly, of the public life, thus shaping a "câmp al iluziilor" [field of illusions] where the instances of writing – the characters, the author and the narrator – mingle and coexist in the virtual space of the text-memory with other actors, individuals or words, which, together, draw the lines of a destiny (Mihăieş 2005: 127–131). So is a *sui-generis* autobiography born, in its beautiful shapes, agreeable [29], or devastating [30].

The problem of exile, as state of mind of the estranged, of the bilingual writer, returns constantly in the pages of the journal. The illusion of overcoming this identity status proves to be part of the very being of the one who willingly abandoned her homeland. To feed her with its ethereal substance. And, once more, the reading of the others' confessions is a re-reading (or re-writing) of her own identity history: "Herta Müller are ceva viu în felul ei, o autenticitate țărănească din satul ei de şvabi, din Banat. Pe scurt, este un poet. A vorbit mult despre satul ei, despre limba română, despre cuvinte, despre străinătate, despre germana ei care nu e considerată cu adevărat germană în Germania, cu toate premiile literare primite, ea se simte un străin cu rădăcinile undeva în aer" [Herta Müller has something alive in her manner, a rural authenticity from her Swabian village, from Banat. In short, she is a poet. She spoke at length about her village, about Romanian language, about words, about abroad, about her German which is not considered actual German in Germany, with all the literary prizes received, she feels a foreigner with the roots somewhere up in the air] (Melinescu 2010: 78). Incorporating the text as a state of the being living in a totalitarian society, Gabriela Melinescu developed a con-substantiality with the generic state of the uprooted, which provides the written text with unique characteristics. This explains why the beauty of mother's face, from the only photograph that could be kept, transfers on the emotionally impregnated space of the native land and of the Romanian language. And, when the two languages, Romanian and Swedish, entwine, they make possible the reclaim of the Edenic age, in effect, of its projection in a necessary personal myth.

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Accordingly, the obsession for searching the original, archetypal and unique language, the very essence of the human and of communication returns. An intense language, possessive in its existing force, intimate and warm, "limba învățată de la acea mamă care ne-a învățat prin sunete o limbă fără stricte reguli gramaticale, în timp ce alăpta la sân copilul cu care comunică perfect prin incomunicabile, limba intimă, de nedescris, prin fonemele ei semănând cu poezia, departe de limba socială castratoare şi mincinoasă. (…)" [the language learnt from the mother who taught us through sounds a language without strict grammatical rules, while she was breast-feeding the baby with whom she communicates perfectly through incommunicables, the mother tongue, indescribable, in its phonemes resembling poetry, far from the social language, castrating and deceitful. (…)] (Melinescu 2010: 95).

Furthermore, ethnic discrimination proliferates in Sweden. The intensification of the Neo-Nazi type of actions, on the background of an Aryan nationalism disregards the increase in the working capacity by the inclusion of the emigrants in the Swedish community. Moreover, the concern for political correctness leads to dissimulation, the Swedes blocking all channels of emotional communication with the *foreigners*. Obsessed with their identitary superiority, equally suffering from the superiority and from the inferiority complex, the Swedes are "o nație de autişti" [a nation of autists] (Melinescu 2010: 176), in the diary writer's view. And when the restlessness of the search for the self in a world perceived as increasingly foreign transforms into despair, the epistolary insertions signed by René recall to textual memory and in the profile of the diaristic self the mirror-image of the twin, of the one who, similar and yet distinct, serves best the textual mechanisms of self-discovery. Thus, hypocrisy understood as necessary solution for survival makes the Swedes capable of extreme gestures: pupils set fire to schools and shoot their teachers, or they turn the description of atrocious murders into entertainment topic.

Beyond all these, the nocturnal and diurnal realms of the diary meet, dramatically, in the overcoming of the sensation of ephemeral fulfilment brought by the exhibition at the Romanian Cultural Institute in Stockholm, signed Gabriela Melinescu, the joy of seeing exhibited her wood-painting, her ink drawings, her paintings in the Japanese technique of using a rice paste resist and dying. The falseness of any illusion, be it artistic, provides a circular ending to the journal about hopes and failures, (false) existential solutions, about being situated in one language or another, rarely, simultaneously in both. In other words, "sensul unei expoziții sau al apariției unei cărți este poate trăirea unei false fericiri, succesul – o trezire amară la realitate – pentru că nimic nu e făcut să aline greutatea vieții care apasă pe toți oamenii orice ar face ei" [the meaning of an exhibition or of publishing a book is perhaps living a false happiness, success – a bitter call to reality – because nothing is meant to alleviate the harsheness of life which weighs heavy on all people no matter what they do] (Melinescu 2010: 245), is no less illusory. On the other hand, even if the *twin* René is dead, love alone seems to resist time and identity anxieties.

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Conclusion

Consequently, the scriptural profile of the self is constituted of multiple self-reflections, which allow it to discover itself in a discourse whose subjectivity is only hoped to lead to "the objectivity of the soul". More explicitly, "problema reflexivității în scriiturile eului presupune o formulare sui-generis a principiului specular. Eventualele prolegomene la un autoportret – în cheie figurativă ori non-figurativă – sunt condiționate de gestul punerii în paranteză a lumii înconjurătoare prin aşezarea unei oglinzi-obstacol în calea privirii" [the problem of reflexivity in the writings of the self presupposes a sui-generis expression of the specular principle. The eventual prolegomenas to a self-portrait – in a figurative or non-figurative key – are determined by the gesture of placing between brackets the surrounding world by placing a mirror-obstacle in the line of sight] (Ioana Petrescu: http://www.observatorcultural.ro/Exil-si-emigrare-o-dragoste-conflictuala* articleID_13244-articles_details.html). Thus, the sight is directed towards the hypostases of the self in the text, self-deluding itself that it carries the image of world in itself.

NOTES

[1] See Jean-François Bayart, *The Illusion of Cultural Identity*, Translated by Steven Rendall, Janet Roitman, Cynthia Schoch and Jonathan Derrick, University of Chicago Press (Co-published with C. Hurst & Co.), 2005, as well as the comment signed by Tara H. Milbrandt, in "Canadian Journal of Sociology Online", http://www.cjsonline.ca/reviews/illusionidentity.html

[2] Here is the synthesizing definition of the concept: "by multiple identity, I assumed either the equal summation of different cultural, linguistic, religious roots, or the genesis of an identity, which is different from the initial ones, case in which the urban, regional and social spaces confer it the new name". – Victor Neumann, *Perspective comparative asupra filozofiei multiculturale*, "Caietele Echinox", nr.1/2001, p. 70. The definition supports our research as it covers very well the identitary particularities specific to the diaristic writing of an Eastern – Romanian intellectual in exile.

[3] See, in this respect, for details related to cultural hybridizations specific to diaspora, Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory. A Critical Introduction*, Edinburgh University Press, 1995. The interactive-dialogical nature of the relationships between the foreigner living in a different country and the community he has to enter and which regards him with suspicion and superiority derived from an elitist complex, is discussed, among others, by Harish Trivedi, in *Colonial Transactions: English Literature and India*, Papyrus, Calcutta, 1993, as well as by Mary Louise Pratt, in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation,* Routledge, London, 1993. See also Nicoleta Ifrim, *Perspectives on Identity in the Romanian Post-totalitarian Critique: Adrian Marino and His Pro-European "Third Discourse*", in

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[4] The syntagms were used from the following studies, respectively: Eugen Simion, *Genurile biograficului*, Bucureşti, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 2002, Thomas Clerc, *Les écrits personnels,* Hachette, 2001, Sébastien Hubier, *Littératures intimes,* Armand Colin, 2003.

[5] "Lorsque Gilles Deleuze attire l'attention sur la fait qu'on n'écrit pas avec ses souvenirs, que l'écriture commence quand naît une troisième personne en nous, il semble a juste titre se défier d'une conception naïve de la littérature a la première personne". – Thomas Clerc, *Les écrits personnels,* Hachette, 2001, p. 41.

[6] Philippe Lejeune, *Le Pacte autobiographique*, Seuil, 1975.

[7] Serge Doubrovsky, *Fils*, Paris, Galilée, 1977.

[8] "Cette manière nouvelle d'opposer la mêmeté du caractère au maintien de soi-même dans la promesse ouvre un intervalle *de sens* qui reste a combler. Cet intervalle est ouvert par la polarité, en termes temporelles, entre deux modèles de permanence dans le temps, la persévération du caractère et le maintien du soi dans la promesse". – "c'est le milieu que vient d'occcuper la notion d'identité narrative. – Paul Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre*, Seuil, 1990, p. 150.

[10] We mention here a few titles of the poetry volumes – *Ceremonie de iarnă*, Bucureşti, Editura pentru Literatură, 1965, *Florile destrămate*, Bucureşti, Editura Tineretului, 1967, *Interiorul legii*, Bucureşti, Editura pentru Literatură, 1968, *Boală de origine divină*, Bucureşti, Editura Albatros, 1970, *Jurământul de sărăcie, castitate şi supunere*, Bucureşti, Editura Eminescu, 1972, *Îngânarea lumii*, Bucureşti, Editura Albatros, 1972, *Împotriva celui drag*, Bucureşti, Editura Eminescu, 1975.

[11] We recall a few titles, selectively: – poetry – *Zeul fecundităţii*, Coeckelberghs Förlag, 1977, *Oglinda femeii*, Coeckelberghs Förlag, 1986; prose – *Copiii răbdării*, Coeckelberghs Förlag, 1979, *Lupii urcă în cer*, Coeckelberghs Förlag, 1981.

[12] Gabriela Melinescu, *Jurnal suedez* I, *1976–1983,* Bucureşti, Editura Univers, 2000; *Jurnal suedez* II, *1983–1989*, Bucureşti, Editura Polirom, 2003; *Jurnal suedez* III, *1990–1996,* Bucureşti, Editura Polirom, 2004; *Jurnal suedez* IV, *1997–2002,* Bucureşti, Editura Polirom, 2008; *Jurnal suedez* V, *2003–2008,* Bucureşt, Editura Polirom, 2010.

[13] "Limba este mai întâi ton, cântec, invocaţie şi apoi cuvinte, de aceea numai o comunitate vitală poate să-mi dea tonul autentic, ca pe urmă, cu uşurinţă, să pot cânta aria mea. Limba maternă" [Language begins as a sound, a song, an invocation and then words, that is why only a vital community can offer me the genuine sound, so that I can easily interpret my aria. The native language.] – Gabriela Melinescu, *Jurnal suedez* I, ed. cit., p. 9.

[14] "Spinoza, la al cărui sân mă adăpostesc destul de des, aşa cum mă odihnesc şi pe genunchii lui Epictet, mă luminează mereu asupra dorinţei care ne păcăleşte în fiecare zi cu noi iluzii, care se sparg apoi ca nişte bule de săpun" [Spinoza, at whose bosom I often find shelter, the way I rest on Epictetus' knees, is

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always guiding me as to the desire that tricks us every day with new illusions, which later burst like bubbles] – *ibidem*, p. 173.

[15] "Lucrez cu o plăcere nebună şi îmi închipui că mama mă priveşte, sau bunica de la țară, Filofteia, sau mătuşa Chiva. Oare se uită la mine din aerul lor care este eterul lui Homer, acolo unde se țin cei dispăruți. Este un fel de a fi cu cei pe care-i iubesc şi chiar cu limba lor care nu este limba de lemn folosită la Bucureşti, sau în cercul literaților, ci limba celor care abia pot să-şi scrie numele, dar pentru care fiecare cuvânt e tensionat, de o trăire imensă" [I work with a mad pleasure and I imagine that my mother is watching me, or my grandmother in the country, Filofteia, or aunt Chiva. Maybe they are looking at me from their air which is Homer's aether, where the departed are kept. It is a way of being with the ones I love and even with their language which is not the wooden language used in Bucharest or in the circle of literates; it is the language of those who can barely spell their names, but for whom each word is charged by a tremendous intensity] – *ibidem*, p. 65.

[16] "N-am mai putut să intru în atmosfera cărții mele. În schimb m-am jucat cu literele, am vrut să văd ce cuvinte pot forma din numele meu și apoi din al lui René, să văd ce se ascunde în forma lor. Din numele meu au ieşit cuvintele ariel, lemn, gamaliel, elan, galileia, inel, miere… Din numele lui René au ieşit cuvintele care-l descriu bine : cocoș, cer, lege, cerc, cerb, rebel…" [I could no longer enter the atmosphere of my book. Instead, I played with the letters, I wanted to see what words I could create from my name and then René's, to see what is hidden in their form. From my name came words like ariel, wood, gamaliel, impetus, galileia, ring, honey… From René's name came the words that describe him best: rooster, sky, law, circle, stag, rebel…] – *ibidem*, p. 65.

[17] "Deja Alef este o întreagă filosofie: omul care arată cu o mână cerul şi cu alta pământul, omul ca literă a Genezei" [Alef is already an entire philosophy: the man who points at the sky with one hand and at the Earth with the other, the man as a letter of Genesis.] – *ibidem*.

[18] "Trebuie spus că n-am avut o copilărie, ci, ca mulți alții, doar un coşmar penibil, care mă mai urmăreşte încă şi mă face să cred că nu vin de niciunde. Câteva oaze de fericire, insule rare, au existat poate prin prieteni și iubiri, dar toate crunt plătite, rănile le port încă precum un scut împotriva dorinței de a mai visa la «copilăria mea»...." [It must be said that I had no childhood, only, as many others, a ridiculous nightmare which still haunts me and it makes me believe that I come from nowhere. A few happy havens, rare islands existed perhaps through friends and love stories, but all of them terribly paid in full, I still carry the wounds as a shield against the desire to dream of «my childhood»...] – *ibidem*, p. 57.

[19] See, in this respect, Eugen Simion, *Ficțiunea jurnalului intim*, vol. I, Bucureşti, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 2001, p. 96–97.

[20] "Dicționarele de geografie culturală, în vogă azi, definesc frontierele drept structuri spațiale elementare, cu funcție de discontinuitate geopolitică şi de marcaj, de reper, operând în trei registre: real, simbolic şi imaginar. Prin urmare,

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a stabili o frontieră înseamnă a exprima un punct colectiv de vedere, care implică moduri specifice de a fi în raport cu Celălalt. Fie că înglobează sau că exclud, frontierele pun întotdeauna în mişcare mărci puternice ale identităţii care îşi lasă amprenta asupra raporturilor culturale într-un teritoriu locuit". [The dictionaries of cultural geography, very popular nowadays, define borders as elementary space structures, functioning as geo-political discontinuity and landmark, reference, operating in three registers: the real, the symbolic and the imaginary. As a result, to establish a border means to express a collective point of view, which implies specific ways of relating to the Other. Whether they include or they exclude, the borders always set in motion powerful marks of identity, which influence the cultural relations in an inhabited space.] – Monica Spiridon, "Inventând Europa – identităţi şi frontiere" (I), *Observator cultural*, nr. 317–318 / 20 aprilie – 3 mai 2006.

[21] "Mă interesează tot ce se scrie despre limba franceză de cei care au îndrăznit să scrie în această limbă teribil de dificilă. Dintre toţi, Cioran al nostru e cel mai picant: «O limbă specializată în suspine şi intelect şi pentru care ce nu e cerebral este suspect şi nul. Sublimul, oribilul, blestemul sau strigătul, francezul nu le abordează decât ca să le denatureze prin retorică. El nu e adaptat delirului şi nici humorului brut... pentru străin, un instrument de salvare, asceză şi o terapeutică. Cum să fii nebun sau poet în asemenea limbă? Toate cuvintele par lucide. Să le foloseşti în mod poetic echivalează cu aventura sau martiriul»" [I am interested in everything written on the French language by those who had the courage to write in this very difficult language. Among all, our Cioran is the most savoury: «A language specialized in whispers and intellect, where something that is not intellectual is suspicious and null. The sublime, the horrible, the curse or the scream, the French approaches them only to distort them through rhetoric. He is not adapted to delirium and neither to rough humour… for the foreigner, a saving instrument, ascesis and therapy. How can you be a madman or a poet in such a language? All words seem lucid. To use them in a poetical manner is equal to adventure or martyrdom.»] – Gabriela Melinescu, *Jurnal suedez* II, ed. cit., p. 19–20.

[22] "L'analyse des lectures de l'écrivain sert souvent à ce dernier d'embrayeur à une introspection qui, en retour, nourrit son oeuvre et modifie son style". – Hubier, p. 66.

[23] "Citesc din *Jurnalul* lui Delacroix ca să găsesc o justificare pentru momentele mele speciale în care iluziile joacă un mare rol: «În privinţa seducerilor care-i deranjează pe mulţi oameni, n-am fost niciodată neliniştit de ele, azi mai puţin ca altădată. Cine ar crede asta? Ceea ce e foarte real pentru mine sunt iluziile cu care imi creez picturile. Restul e nisip mişcător»" [I am reading from Delacroix's *Journal* to find a justification for my special moments when the illusions play a great role: « related to the seductions that bother many people, I was never bothered by them, today less than ever. Who could believe that? That which is very real for me are the illusions that I use in my paintings. Everything else is quick sand»]. – Gabriela Melinescu, *Jurnal suedez* II, ed. cit., p. 165.

[24] "Noi, străinii, suntem brusc priviţi ca posibili criminali pentru că poporul crede că teroristul sau asasinul e mereu un străin. S-a ţinut un minut de

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tăcere în toată țara în amintirea lui Palme – totul a încremenit în oraș, oamenii au devenit stane de piatră. Străinii din Stockholm au organizat o manifestație de doliu arătând iubirea și respectul pentru cel dispărut" [We, foreigners, are suddenly regarded as possible criminals because the people thinks that the terrorist or the murderer is always a foreigner. A moment of silence was kept in the entire country in Palme's memory – everything stopped in the city, the people became blocks of stone. Foreigners from Stockholm organised a mourning manifestation displaying their affection and respect for the departed]. – Gabriela Melinescu, *Jurnal suedez* II, ed. cit., p. 113.

[25] "Trăiesc o viață dublă cu mortul meu. «Trecutul» din textele lui René adresate mie mă umple de o energie fără nume. Trăiesc în plină literatură: inventez viața începând cu moartea, adică de la sfârșit la început. O trăire în care nu se contează pe viitor, pentru că el de fapt nici nu există, fiind o ficțiune din serpentinele misterioase din trecut." [I am living a double life with my departed. «The past» from René's texts addressed to me fill me with a great energy. I live in full literature: I invent life, starting with death, that is, from the end to the beginning. A life which does not count on the future, because it actually does not exist, being a fiction from the mysterious serpentines of the past]. – Gabriela Melinescu, *Jurnal suedez* II, ed. cit., p. 47.

[26] "A mă lega de neant ar însemna o totală consolare pentru toate legăturile imperfecte făcute aici, în timpul vieții mele. Cu cât trăiesc mai mult, cu atât îmi dau seama de fragilitatea tuturor sentimentelor, gândurilor, stărilor de care m-am angajat cu inconștiență, numai pentru a mă deturna de stabilitatea unei solide «legături» cu tot ce e neant" [To tie myself to the nothingness would mean a complete consolation for all the imperfect connections made here, during my lifetime. The more I live, the more I come to realise the fragility of all feelings, thoughts, states that I assumed unconsciously, only so as to turn away from the stability of a solid "connection" with everything which is nothingness]. – Gabriela Melinescu, *Jurnal suedez* III, ed. cit., p. 165.

[27] "Și numai cine știe ce înseamnă să te traduci pe tine dintr-o limbă în alta poate să înțeleagă că e un chin sfâșietor să-ți «omori» limba maternă, silind-o să intre într-o alta ca într-o coajă străină, pentru un miez exploziv de un gen ținând strict de limba de origine" [And only the one who knows what it means to translate oneself from a language into another can understand that it is a heart-breaking torment to "kill" your native language, forcing it to enter another one, as if in a foreign shell, for an explosive core of a type strictly specific to the native language]. – Gabriela Melinescu, *Jurnal suedez* III, ed. cit., p. 203.

[28] "La festivalul de poezie de la Gävle, împreună cu Carlos Juan și Cletus Nelson (african superb) care trăiește la Nessjö, cu familie suedeză. Mă simt bine printre tineri. Cletus e ludic și place publicului. Hotelul e curat și cu patina locului, peste tot un rasism camuflat" [At the poetry festival in Gävle, together with Carlos Juan and Cletus Nelson (gorgeous African) who lives in Nessjö, with a Swedish family. I feel good among the young. Cletus is ludic and the public like him. The hotel is clean and it bears the mark of the place, everywhere a camouflaged

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racism]. – *ibidem*, p. 54. "Eu nu sunt tânără ca frumoasa Abişag, dar oamenii mai în vârstă mi-au spus că am « strălucire » şi că se bucură când mă văd. Este vorba de surpriza trezită de tot ce e « străin », ceva de care oamenii aici, în Nord, se tem şi în acelaşi timp, sunt fascinați, ca de necunoscut" [I am not young like the beautiful Abişag, but older people told me I have a "glow" and that they are glad when they see me. It is the surprise of everything "foreign", something the people here, in the North, fear and, at the same time, are fascinated by, as by the unknown]. – *ibidem*, p. 142.

[29] "Luna cea mai frumoasă, sărbătoarea culorilor. (1 mai 2005). Îmi petrec viața scriind, citind, desenând. Aceste activități îmi propun noi feluri de a fi eu însămi. Important e că nu mă plictisesc niciodată, că scap de alții şi de mine însămi luând în primire ego-uri necunoscute" [The most beautiful month, the celebration of colours (1 May 2005) I spend my life writing, reading, drawing. These activities suggest to me new ways of being myself. The important thing is that I don't ever get bored, that I break free from the others and from myself adopting unknown selves]. – Gabriela Melinescu, *Jurnal suedez* V, ed. cit., p. 74.

[30] "Mă dor mâinile din nou. Cu ce am gresit? Cu gândul că trăiesc într-un pustiu nefiind nici scriitor român, nici suedez. Asta înseamnă că acel nimic care se numeşte identitate mă face să sufăr" [My hands hurt again. What have I done wrong? Thinking that I live in a wasteland being neither a Romanian writer, nor a Swedish. This means that that nothing called identity makes me suffer]. – *ibidem*, p. 75.

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ABSTRACT

Our research aims to underline the purpose and the means of articulation of an unstable identitary-cultural profile, constantly subject to negotiations and translation in between different languages and worlds, elaborated in *Jurnalul suedez/The Swedish Journal* by Gabriela Melinescu – a writer in Romanian and Swedish, native to Romania. While trying to adapt to exile in Sweden and carrying with her the trauma of the communist dictatorship in Romania, the writer employs the mechanisms by which the journal creates successive illusions of the real so as to seek refuge from the illusive multicultural reality into a compensating search for the self.

Keywords: cultural illusion, identity, representations of the self, representations of the other, autofiction, personal diary.

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